

Chapter 12

The European Neighborhood Policy and Its Capacity to Manage Mobility and Migration

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12.1 Developing the European Neighborhood Policy

The European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) was launched by two complimentary documents, drafted in March 2003 and May 2004, both aimed to avoid further separation of the continent, and strengthen relations between the European Union (EU) and its neighboring countries.¹ By providing aid, access to the European market, and cooperation in various fields, the ENP expects the partner countries to improve their economic and political performance. Amongst others, mobility and migration have been acknowledged as serious matters of concern. The 2003 communication from the European Commission, while noting that “[t]he EU and the neighbors have a mutual interest in cooperating, both bilaterally and regionally” (European Commission 2003: 6), called the Union to “assist in reinforcing the neighboring countries’ efforts to combat illegal migration and to establish efficient mechanisms for returns, especially illegal transit migration” (Ibid: 11). Similarly, the 2004 ENP strategy paper confirmed the relevance of “cooperation in the fight against illegal immigration, and management of legal migration and implementation of migration plans” (European Commission 2004a: 23) (Fig. 12.1).

Looking back to the initial stages of the European Neighborhood Policy, it seems that some of its basic ideas and plans as how to proceed were well positioned. For example, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighborhood Policy at the time, while noting the complexity of the migration issue in the European Union, underlined that migration should not be

¹The countries covered by the ENP include Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine. However, Belarus, Libya and Syria do not yet benefit from all ENP’s instruments.

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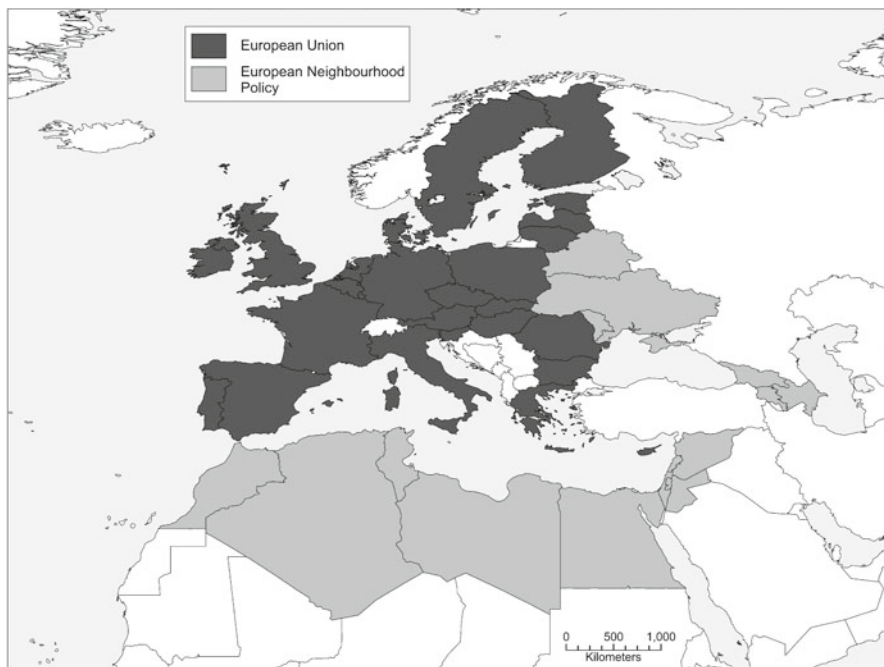


Fig. 12.1 The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was introduced in 2004, with the aim to avoid divisions between the enlarged European Union and its neighbors. The ENP places a strong emphasis on democratic values and economic development. Cartography courtesy of Pam Schaus, Wilfrid Laurier University

approached as a problem, but as a reality that the present Europe actually needs: “Immigration is an important part of the solution. It will help us make the transition to a new economic situation, and maintain a certain level of growth” (Ferrero-Waldner 2006). The early stages of European integration were also characterized by an almost daily arrival of immigrants from the countries that are now included in the ENP, with their presence in Europe representing part of the solution to sustaining post-Second World War economic prosperity. In addition, Ferrero-Waldner’s statement can be clearly supported with the statistical evidence, which shows the diminishing and aging European population:

Population growth in the EU25 until 2025 will be mainly due to net migration, since total deaths in the EU25 will outnumber total births from 2010. The effect of net migration will no longer outweigh the natural decrease after 2025, when the population will start to decline gradually. The population will reach 449.8 million on 1 January 2050, that is a decrease of more than 20 million inhabitants compared to 2025. Over the whole projection period the EU25 population will decrease by 1.5%, resulting from a 0.4% increase for the EU15 and an 11.7% decrease for the ten new Member States (European Commission 2005: 23).

However, even if European officials have demonstrated awareness of the situation, the 2004 enlargement of the EU, when ten new countries joined the Union, showed that the authorities and public in some of the old EU Member States did not

feel comfortable with a growing presence of new Europeans in their states. Indeed, one study revealed that “[t]he Polish authorities complained that the older EU members were trying to shield their countries against competition from Polish labour, products, and services” (Bugajski and Teleki 2007: 84). Thus, if this is the case characterizing the enlarged EU, how successful can the ENP be with regard to mobility and migration?

Although the overall cooperation with the countries covered by the European Neighborhood Policy has grown in the meantime, it proved that European Union authorities lack mechanisms that would address the problem with regard to movement of people from the partner countries to the EU. While admitting that the visa policies and practices in place often impose obstacles to legitimate travel, the ENP has maintained that such concerns “can only be addressed in the context of broader packages to address related issues such as cooperation on illegal immigration, in particular by sea, combating trafficking and smuggling in human beings, efficient border management, readmissions agreements and effective return of illegal migrants, and adequate processing of requests for international protection and asylum” (European Commission 2006: 6). Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain are countries whose geography makes them attractive for asylum seekers and economic migrants (King 2001; Miles and Thränhardt 1995; Venturini 2004). Still, some of the attempts to reach the European continent never materialize, as many migrants die somewhere along their travel across the Mediterranean Sea. In order to minimize such scenarios, the Commission identified two action points that could potentially regulate mobility and migration: one focusing on visa facilitation for business, educational, official and tourist purposes, and the other, focusing on readmission and border management that would prevent illegal immigration (European Commission 2006: 6).

12.2 Mobility and Migration

In September 2004, the European Commission stressed that “[t]he privileged relationship between the European Union and its neighbors will build on commitments to common values, including democracy, the rule of law, good governance and respect for human rights, and to the principles of market economy, free trade, sustainable development and poverty reduction” (European Commission 2004b: 11–12). All these values and principles indicate that the European Neighborhood Policy is open exclusively to countries that recognize the relevance of these values to their own interests, and are ready to engage in political and economic reforms. As followed, the Commission produced draft Action Plans for seven ENP-participating countries outlining, as suggested, “a limited number of key priorities and offer[ing] real incentives for reform” (General Affairs and External Relations Council 2004). In regards to mobility and migration, Israel, Jordan, Moldova, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Tunisia and Ukraine, were altogether called to respect legislation based on international principles and standards, in particular,

the 1951 Geneva Convention and its 1967 Protocol. The purpose of this was to promote effective management of migration flows (conditioned by active cooperation on legal migration, transit migration, return and readmission), to prevent and combat illegal migration, and to take part in a constructive dialogue with the EU on facilitation of visa regimes.

In her analysis, Karen Smith correctly observes that the above-mentioned processes are not straightforward for various reasons: it is not always clear who is expected to carry out the action – the European Union or the participating neighboring party, it is unclear how progress will be assessed, and there is no time limit for reaching particular goals (Smith 2005: 764–765). Given the concerns, political dialogue has appeared to be of crucial relevance. It is an instrument used to influence existing conditions in the neighboring countries that should lead to new policies, and thus improved political climate. In this process, democracy itself plays an important role as a necessary component of good governance.² According to Michael Emerson, the European Union is a center of democratic gravity and therefore, could surely inspire the neighbours.

The tendency for other states to converge on the democratic model of the centre depends on the reputational quality and attractiveness of that democracy, its geographic and cultural-historical proximity and its openness to the periphery. Openness may be defined first in terms of freedom for the movement of persons as determined by visa and migration rules, and, second and more deeply, by the opportunities for political integration of the periphery into the centre. When political integration is in principle possible, the process can become one of conditionality. When the incentive is one of full political integration, the transitional conditionality can become extremely strong and intrusive, yet still democratically legitimate and therefore acceptable. The frontiers between the external and internal are being broken down, and the conclusion of the process – with recognition of full compliance with high standards of liberal democracy and full inclusion in the institutions of democratic governance – will be ratified, for example by popular referendum. Beyond such voting mechanisms is the underlying sense of common identity, relying on emotive, historical and cultural fields of gravitational attraction, where to be ‘joining Europe’, or ‘rejoining Europe’ means something fundamental. (Emerson 2004: 5)

It is easy to conclude that Emerson’s ideas point out some of the strategies that would eventually lead to the desired scenario within the European Union: first, to consolidate the position and relevance of the EU as such, and second, to foster its relations with the neighborhood. Some other scholars are more reserved, and while seeing the heterogeneous character of the neighbours as being almost sufficient reason to challenge the crucial objectives of the policy, suggest that insisting on a common approach can be problematic due to diverse priorities (energy, market integration, political conditionality, regionalism, etc.) characterizing the relationship between the EU and particular ENP members (Khasson et al. 2009).

²This paper appreciates David Beetham’s understanding of democracy: “Democracy I take to be a mode of decision-making about collectively binding rules and policies over which the people exercise control, and the most democratic arrangement is that where all members of the collectivity enjoy effective equal rights to take part in such decision-making directly” (Beetham 1993: 55).

In approaching the above-noted issues, the European Union is testing itself in foreign policy, and its intention to make ‘a ring of friends’, thus protecting its borders (Harris 2004: 98–100). The partner countries are expected to share with the EU an interest in maintaining confidence, supporting growth, providing employment and strengthening their political position. Therefore, political dialogue is an arena where all partners should actively participate and share common interests. Due to the fact that security is an issue dominating the political agendas of each partner country as well as the agendas of the EU, the political dialogue is seen as a forum for communicating information with regard to illegal activities and counter-terrorism strategies. The neighbours’ consistent presence in political dialogue is important because it influences final decisions, and in this they should not feel threatened or inferior, but rather, equal. However, it has been difficult to prove that the political dialogue serves its purpose. Besides the occasional meetings, the EU and its partners have failed in their attempt to create an open and dynamic political dialogue that would deliver the results wished for by the ENP (Missiroli 2007: 3–4). This means that in order to engage in a more substantial and fruitful dialogue with the neighbours, the dialogue should be institutionalized and put into use on a more frequent basis.

According to the European Union, Europeanization³ of the partner states (through adoption of common values, rules and practices, democratization, and strengthening of security mechanisms) is perceived as the best way to assure security and stability (Grazulis 2006). In fact, the European Neighborhood Policy is imagined as purely based on the traditional Western model that disregards specific and different parameters found in the partner countries under the ENP. “[T]he privileged relationship with neighbours will build on mutual commitment to common values principally within the field of the rule of law, good governance, the respect for human rights, including minority rights, the promotion of good neighborly relations, and the principles of market economy” (European Commission 2004a: 3).

With regard to the export of European model of democracy, we can argue that the desire as to how the neighborhood should look, is possibly inspired by Europe’s own experience from the recent past, when some of its parts (Central and Southern) struggled with democracy, but then at one point became sufficiently democratic. In this respect, the European Union is concerned about the situation in the neighborhood. “[The] fear of a possible spill-over effect from the conflict-ridden Mediterranean to Europe is reflected in the prioritization of the EU with regard to cooperation with the

³Emerson and Nouthcheva (2005) define Europeanization, EU-ization or democratization, as a phenomenon under which certain countries follow the EU model on political and economic system for national reform in order for perspective membership in the EU. The term Europeanization was mainly coined regarding the transition of the Central and Eastern European countries; however, nowadays this term has a broader sense and it encompasses the ENP countries. The Europeanization also means European integration, or integration within the socio-cultural-economic space of the EU. According to the most recent definition on Europeanization, according to both authors, is a process that works in three ways that are synergistically interconnected. Those three ways are: legal obligations (under the EU *acquis*), objective changes (economic reforms) and subjective changes (political will to adapt to the EU’s values and norms).

Southern part on issues of terrorism, illegal immigration, organized crime ... feared too strong pressure for political reforms that could lead to violent transitions processes or result in Islamic taking over government power” (Holm 2004: 10). Therefore, aware of the existing concerns, Eneko Landaburu, Director General of DG External Relations of the EU at the time, described the ENP as an instrument of Europeanization of the neighborhood that would, once Europeanized, provide mechanisms to address and minimize issues such as organized crime, extremism, and terrorism (Landaburu 2006: 3).

The idea of having ‘a ring of friends’ reflects the European Union’s understanding of peace and stability. Some authors are correct in writing that “conflicts may generate risks even when they occur in faraway regions, as they can trigger waves of refugees, asylum seekers or illegal immigrants trying to enter the EU via its neighboring countries, East and South” (Balfour and Missiroli 2007: 27). Specifically, with regard to the Mediterranean region, this idea is viewed as a good way of engaging countries whose populations are often reluctant to engage with the Western world, encouraging them to contribute to regional cooperation necessary for lasting peace and economic progress. However, despite the EU’s direction, the Mediterranean countries have not managed to go far in the process of Europeanization; if neighbours corresponded to the Action Plans guidelines, the process of Europeanization would penetrate them positively.

The European Union maintains that security and stability can only be achieved if neighbours become Europeanized, meaning if they incorporate the right values, norms and institutional practices. Accordingly, the European Neighborhood Policy lists principles of conditionality, wider cooperation, assistance, and access to the market, as components of deeper Europeanization (Harris 2004). This whole organization suggests that the process of Europeanization, on which the EU is seriously insisting, acts as a measure under the ENP when it comes to ensuring that the partner countries behave in concordance with the political requirements under the Action Plans. While the EU is proud of its sustainable development, and political and cultural structures, it also fears ‘the others’, namely countries from the Middle East, North Africa and South Caucasus, because they are often indisposed to change themselves or they simply lack the means to reform their societies and become Europeanized. Such fears are even more understandable given the recent changes and uncertainties in the Arab world. While expressing his appreciation for the outcome of the 2011 revolutions, Štefan Füle, Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighborhood Policy, admitted that “[o]ur policy in the region has not always been right” – an approach to be modified by placing emphasis on two key principles: ‘more for more’ and mutual accountability. As he put it: “While implementation of the ‘More for more’ principle will be challenging – because there will inevitably be differences in how we perceive each country’s progress – the direction is clear: we will only provide those extra incentives – extra funding, visa facilitation and liberalization, greater access to the EU market – to those countries engaged in genuine political reforms” (Füle 2012). When it comes to East European countries, although infected by political instability, corruption, and devastated economies, the situation is different, as those countries have expressed interest in becoming full EU member states.

With regard to the above, it can be said that the European Union has put too much emphasis on the concept of Europeanization as an instrument of achieving the strategic goals under the European Neighborhood Policy. Also, the Union has tried to externalize its own concepts and definitions on mobility, security and terrorism to the ENP partners. As observed by Arcadie Barbarosie, many neighboring partners are reluctant to the idea of undergoing a process of imported Europeanization without certain perspectives being offered by the EU (Barbarosie 2006: 3). In order to succeed in the plans, the EU decided to use its internal market (free trade arrangements and certain financial contribution) as an incentive for the neighborhood to implement political requirements identified by the Action Plans (Emerson and Nouthcheva 2005: 15–16). This approach was successful when applied to the Central and Eastern European countries, due to the fact that the EU offered an explicit perspective on membership, and thus those countries decided to undergo economic and political reforms that would satisfy the Copenhagen criteria⁴ for membership. However, this is not the case with the ENP; besides the ‘more than a partnership, less than a membership’ approach, the EU is not offering anything concrete to its partners. The EU is likely to continue insisting on the process of Europeanization together with some new incentives with regard to trade, more structured financial contribution, and development of new financing programs. These would hopefully lead to political and economic reforms, and finally satisfy the main objective of the ENP – the EU surrounded by a ring of well-governed countries (Emerson and Nouthcheva 2005: 20–22).

Understandably, mobility and migration are affected by the overall progress of the European Neighborhood Policy. As envisaged by the European Commission, mobility partnerships would “take into account the current state of the EU’s relations with the third country concerned as well as the general approach towards it in EU external relations”, and that they would be conditioned by the country’s readiness “in terms of action against illegal migration and facilitating reintegration of returnees, including efforts to provide returnees with employment opportunities” (European Commission 2007: 3). If analyzed separately, some of the requirements are easier to satisfy than others. For example, it is easier to readmit one’s own nationals than to discourage illegal migration, and it is easier to introduce biometric travel documents than to provide employment and decent work. The ENP expects the neighboring partners to improve border control and management, and to cooperate with relevant authorities in the EU in order to minimize the security

⁴Any country seeking membership in the European Union must conform to the conditions set out by Article 49 and the principles laid down in Article 6 (1) of the Treaty on the EU. The relevant criteria were established by the Copenhagen European Council in 1993 and strengthened by the Madrid European Council in 1995. To join the EU, a new Member State must meet three criteria: political (implying stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities), economic (implying existence of a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union) and must accept the Community *acquis* (implying ability to take on the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union); for the European Council to decide to open negotiations, the political criterion must be satisfied).

risks linked to international mobility of people, as already indicated by the 2000 UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime, the 2005 Council of Europe Convention against Trafficking in Human Beings, and applicative regional frameworks such as the 2006 Africa-EU Ouagadougou Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings (Ibid: 4).

12.3 Assessments and Challenges

Štefan Füle, when asked to assess the first 5 years of the ENP, noted that “[t]he ENP is a win-win game: the higher our partners’ reform ambitions, the stronger our response” (European Commission 2010b). In fact, a similar statement accompanied the 2010 sectoral progress report that listed the main achievements of the ENP, such as the visa facilitation and readmission agreements with Moldova and Ukraine, the implementation of two mobility partnerships in Moldova and in Georgia, and the improvement of border controls and surveillance which helped detection of smuggling, illegal migration and customs fraud (European Commission 2010a: 6–7).

For example, the Mobility Partnership with Moldova is expected to foster capacity of the country to regulate legal migration flows, to promote the use of remittances for the local economy, to support the implementation of visa facilitation and readmission agreements, and to protect the victims of trafficking (Ibid). With regard to mobility, in June 2010 the EU and Moldova “established a visa dialogue examining the conditions for visa-free travel of Moldovan citizens to the EU as a long-term goal” (European Commission 2011a: 13). Of course, it rests on the Moldovan government “to regulate legal migration flows, promotion of sustainable use of remittances and their attraction into the local economy” (Ibid: 14). Moldova’s neighbor, Ukraine, has been praised for updating “its research and innovation policy with more direct and sustainable economic development objectives”, leading to greater student and academic mobility to the EU through its grants under the Erasmus Mundus program (European Commission 2011b: 19, 21).

Still, it is important to note that Ukrainian authorities continue to communicate their discontent with the European Neighborhood Policy on every possible occasion. While presenting Ukraine as a European country with EU aspirations, they claim that “the ENP is not about diminishing new dividing lines but it is an artificial construct of the Union and is a deliberately ambiguous policy to handle the question of membership in the short term” (Dimitrovova 2010: 471). Indeed, the existing debates are often quite critical of the political and economic reforms that the ENP has demanded from its Eastern neighbours, as some of them are much tougher than those required by the EU of the Central Eastern European states accessing in 2004. For example, some Polish officials have argued that internal reforms should not necessarily condition accession status, maintaining that the Action Plans for both Ukraine and Moldova should be in the form of Partnerships for Association (Gallina 2009: 58).

The South Caucasus represents a security sub-complex within the Commonwealth of Independent States, a successor entity to the Soviet Union, established in 1991. When analyzing the ENP partners in the region, the EU describes Armenia as a neighbor that is committed to reforms; its government officials have been trained in biometrics and ID management, which is expected to prevent further identity fraud, irregular migration, migrant smuggling and human trafficking. In addition, discussions on the establishment of an EU-Armenia Mobility Partnership were launched, aimed at providing greater mobility of students, researchers, academics and business operators (European Commission 2011c: 12). Similarly, Azerbaijan has shown commitment to mobility by encouraging participation in the EU's Erasmus Mundus program (European Commission 2011d: 14). With regard to migration, the authorities passed the Presidential Decree on Matters Concerning Issuance of Visas for Foreigners and Stateless Persons Arriving in Azerbaijan, tightening and restricting visa issuance procedures (Ibid: 10). The EU and Georgia signed visa facilitation and readmission agreements only in March 2011; therefore, it is difficult to comment on these. By contrast, the mobility has been a bigger success, as numerous grants for students and academics are provided (European Commission 2011e: 19).

Going further, Jordan, while viewed as a neighbor that “continues to host a large number of migrants and refugees from neighboring countries”, is expected to provide “better conditions and modalities for ensuring the mobility of persons, goods and capital” (European Commission 2011f: 16). The situation in Lebanon is presented as more worrying due to the fact that “[m]any refugees are treated as illegal immigrants, with some having been subject to arrest and indefinite detention” (European Commission 2011g: 5). Even though the EU has called on the Lebanese leadership “to give legal recognition to the certificates issued by the United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), especially to Iraqi refugees, and to provide renewable residence permits to persons registered with UNHCR,” no progress could be reported (Ibid). By contrast, some young people and organizations have benefited from the “mobility opportunities offered by the Youth in Action Programme for youth exchanges” (Ibid: 13).

The report on the occupied Palestinian territory does not contain a single notion on migration and only one on mobility, stipulating that “student and academic mobility was enhanced through the expected award of 37 grants for the academic year 2010/11” (European Commission 2011h: 13). With regard to Israel, it has been noted that the country is facing “difficulties in adequately coping, from a legal and administrative point of view, with the fact that it has become the country of destination for an increasing number of irregular migrants and asylum seekers from several African countries, who reach its borders coming from Egypt” (European Commission 2011i: 11). Accordingly, Egypt, a key trading neighbor, has been criticized for violating the rights of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. “Egypt is rapidly becoming a key transit country for migrants and refugees from sub-Saharan Africa (to Europe and other neighboring countries), placing strains on public services and leading to localized tensions. Migrants and refugees are also vulnerable to organized crime and exploitation, particularly smuggling and trafficking networks”

(European Commission 2011j: 14). Moreover, the 2011 popular uprising was accompanied by growing numbers of refugees and asylum applications in the EU and elsewhere. As a reaction to the Egyptian state of uncertainty, EU officials called for a revised ENP approach, placing a greater emphasis on democratic transformation, partnership with the people, and economic development that will eventually improve the general environment of the post-authoritarian Egypt (Bauer 2011: 434–436). Accordingly, apart from launching an immediate civil society package after the departure of former president Hosni Mubarak, the country has also been granted significant development aid for 2011–2013.

Finally, the European Union's neighbours in the Maghreb region, both Morocco and Tunisia, represent a serious matter of concern primarily due to their economic performance. For example, one third of the Moroccan youth are unemployed, which is the main reason why many of them migrate to Europe (European Commission 2011k: 9). The EU has assisted Morocco on various occasions: since 1996, the Mediterranean Economic Development Area (MEDA I) program and then the amended MEDA II offered €1,640 million in grants, the European Investment Bank provided €887 million and the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) secured €654 million for the period 2007–2010 and €580 million for 2011–2013 (Miller and Bower 2010: 504). Apart from talking about Moroccans migrating to the EU, we should not ignore numerous non-Moroccans who could potentially use Morocco as a transit on their way to Europe. The EU insists on readmission, but what Moroccan authorities find frustrating is the EU's perception of Morocco as "the policeman of the Mediterranean", who should accept migrants even "when there is no tangible proof that they have transited through Morocco, especially given the porous border between Morocco and Algeria" (Bicchi 2010: 213).

With regard to Tunisia, a neighbor where the Arab Spring started, the European Union acknowledged that the country has struggled with the control of illegal migration and has been affected by the influx of refugees trying to escape war in Libya, and thus declared itself ready to assist Tunisian authorities in these matters (European Commission 2011l: 13). Accordingly, the two terms of the ENPI have allocated some €550 million to assist Tunisia's economic, social and governance sectors (Europe Aid 2011), an amount to add to nearly €4 billion support for the transition in Tunisia over the next 3 years (European Commission 2011m).

The above offered overview of the main aspects characterizing mobility and migration indicates that the European Union and the European Neighborhood Policy, in particular, are facing numerous challenges. While it is easier to support various academic and business-like programs, and thus a particular type of mobility, the question whether the ENP is powerful enough to assist the partner countries to overcome numerous issues with regard to migration remains largely open. However, it seems that the ENP is determined to provide support and secure progress in less successful fields by promoting mobility and giving an opportunity to researchers and professionals from the neighboring countries to come to the EU, to acquire new knowledge and experience and then, once back to their country of origin, to apply the new skills that will improve the situation in the homeland. Alongside this understanding, the period 2011–2014 is expected to see a renewed, upgraded, ENP.

Apart from confirming the relevance of previously identified priorities, the Member States came to the following conclusion: “[W]e need to take a fresh look at how we can promote mobility in spite of the political difficulties surrounding this issue. We need to give answers in the shorter term to students, researchers and businessmen whose mobility is essential to advance our co-operation. We ... could seek to develop a broader, win-win, approach to mobility and migration where security concerns can also be addressed” (European Commission 2011n: 38).

It can be argued that the economic underperformance is the dominant reason for migrating to the European Union. In addition, the then European Economic Community had numerous agreements with the countries that are encompassed by the European Neighborhood Policy, some of which were signed after the end of the Second World War when the European continent was in need of reconstruction. The migrants were initially welcomed, but later, following the 1973 oil crisis, they were sponsored to return to the country of origin – an idea that never really materialized (Radeljić 2010). Today, when the European public is largely divided over the (im)migration question, EU officials claim that immigration is a part of our reality, and the ENP would like to create ‘a ring of friends’. These friends, as explained earlier, are supposed to become Europeanized, while remaining where they are geographically and acting as a proper protection of the EU external border. But how realistic are all these demands?

12.4 Policy Recommendations

In the European Union, the European Neighborhood Policy is still perceived as a new policy and any evaluation should be taken cautiously due to the fact that many of its ambitious objectives are yet to be achieved. The main critique of the ENP is due to the organizational structure of the policy. As argued by Antonio Missiroli, the current ENP is not different from the previous neighborhood instruments, and it is not a single policy but an umbrella of pre-existing instruments and EU funds. The main difference, as seen by the author, is the fact that the previous bilateral agreements, with every single neighboring country, are now replaced with the general template of the Action Plan being a central component of the ENP (Missiroli 2007: 1).

In the initial launching of the first seven Action Plans and the subsequent evaluation by the European Commission, some progress was noticed with regard to the institutional aspects of execution of the ENP in the partner countries. The seven countries appointed national authorities that would supervise and guide the process of implementation of the Action Plan’s components. Although the initial evaluation of the Commission was based on mid-term observation, the EU and its partners were praised for demonstrating significant progress in customs affairs and a more integrated approach in the trade exchange under the free trade arrangements. More importantly for us here, mobility and migration have progressed to some extent as various programs of exchange were introduced and greater attention was paid to

problems, including illegal immigration and readmission. However, further progress is likely to be conditioned by the quality of political dialogue. Due to the fact that the political dialogue as a means was instituted within the Action Plans in order to improve the communication of the Union with the ENP partners on security matters (including mobility and migration), the evidence of any concrete progress has often lagged behind. It can be noted that the relevance of addressing such issues will not diminish, as the EU is facing a growing presence of immigrants and more obvious consequences of such a presence. In this respect, political dialogue, while going deeper into the root of the problem, should obviously avoid any asymmetric positions that could provide space for the EU's "soft imperialism" characterized by "imposition or strategic use of norms and conditionalities in the self-interest rather than for the creation of a genuine (inter-regional) dialogue" (Hettne and Söderbaum 2005: 539).

It has been suggested that the new outlook of the European Neighborhood Policy is casting serious doubts on whether the organizational and institutional structure of the ENP will be able to correspond and complete the strategic aims of the policy. Hence, many doubts are based on the question of whether the ENP can fulfill its ambitious objectives with regard to its implementation, especially on the enacted security strategies with its partners. Even though the ENP has offered new opportunities to the neighbours, the current content has remained insufficiently developed and differentiated from the policy that was in place before (Stetter 2005: 12–13). When it comes to delivering specific implementing parameters for security issues, in order to increase the overall efficiency of the ENP, the EU should apply the so-called 'carrot' policy. This means that by enabling certain explicit incentives to the EU's internal market opportunities and inclusion within the development policy, the neighboring countries will be more eager to follow the instructions and dedicate themselves to efficient implementation of the plans under the ENP. Thus, in the future, if the EU wants to pursue its policy of a security zone creation in the Europe's periphery, it will have to offer a certain degree of incentives hard to resist by the partner countries.

Still, as argued elsewhere, the European Neighborhood Policy is too broad as a policy to encompass the diverse regions it currently aims to cover. The East European neighbours, the South Caucasus, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean region, differ among themselves and even though in need of similar assistance, they still require different approaches. The current institutional setting of the ENP does not enable a sufficient organizational framework that would be able to effectively develop and implement the security strategies under the bilateral agreements with the partner countries. Indeed, the organizational framework did not manage to provide the means for good governance in the ENP and moreover, the path dependency of the then institutional setup of the ENP meant that the policy was characterized by a strong centre-periphery complex towards the neighboring regions of the EU (Stetter 2005: 11). This trend has not significantly improved and any postponement could easily affect the relations between the two sides. "The EU needs its neighbours' cooperation to tackle problems of illegal migration, terrorism and cross-border crime, as much as they need access to

partial EU programs. If it does not offer more than is currently on the table, the Union may find itself facing a ring of states in distress rather than a ring of friends” (Cameron and Balfour 2006: 17).

12.5 Conclusion

The European Union and its European Neighborhood Policy, in particular, have faced numerous challenges with regard to mobility and migration. Such challenges are even more difficult to deal with in times of unexpected crises, regardless of whether they unfold within the Union or throughout the neighborhood. We can agree that it is a difficult task to stabilize other countries from the outside. The European Union has faced problems with many of its neighbours over a long history, and it will be difficult to have these issues resolved in a short-term period. Still, given Europe’s own crisis, the EU and its well-advertised ENP have not considered abandoning the neighborhood. For example, the European Commission’s study entitled “Impact of the Global Crisis on Neighboring Countries of the EU” shows how the global financial crisis, which emerged in 2007 and worsened in 2008, has eroded the Union’s economic performance, but it has not minimized the EU’s commitment to the neighbours (European Commission 2009). Indeed, some of the packages agreed for neighbours involved in the Arab Spring confirm the EU’s commitment and readiness to respond promptly.

Finally, thinking about the future, the Europeans should not ignore their neighborhood as they may possibly find themselves in a position to depend on it much more than at present. As some authors put it, “climate change is likely to generate a number of environmental stress factors, including rising sea levels, soil degradation and water scarcity. These, in turn, may well affect crops, biodiversity and people’s living conditions in Europe and beyond, making entire regions inhabitable and triggering mass migration” (Balfour and Missiroli 2007: 29). However, the complexity of the climate change-environment-migration link has often been undermined and the debates about regional and global mismanagement are left aside. This is mostly due to the growing number of problems requiring immediate EU response, because it is necessary to avoid or, at least, minimize negative repercussions.

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